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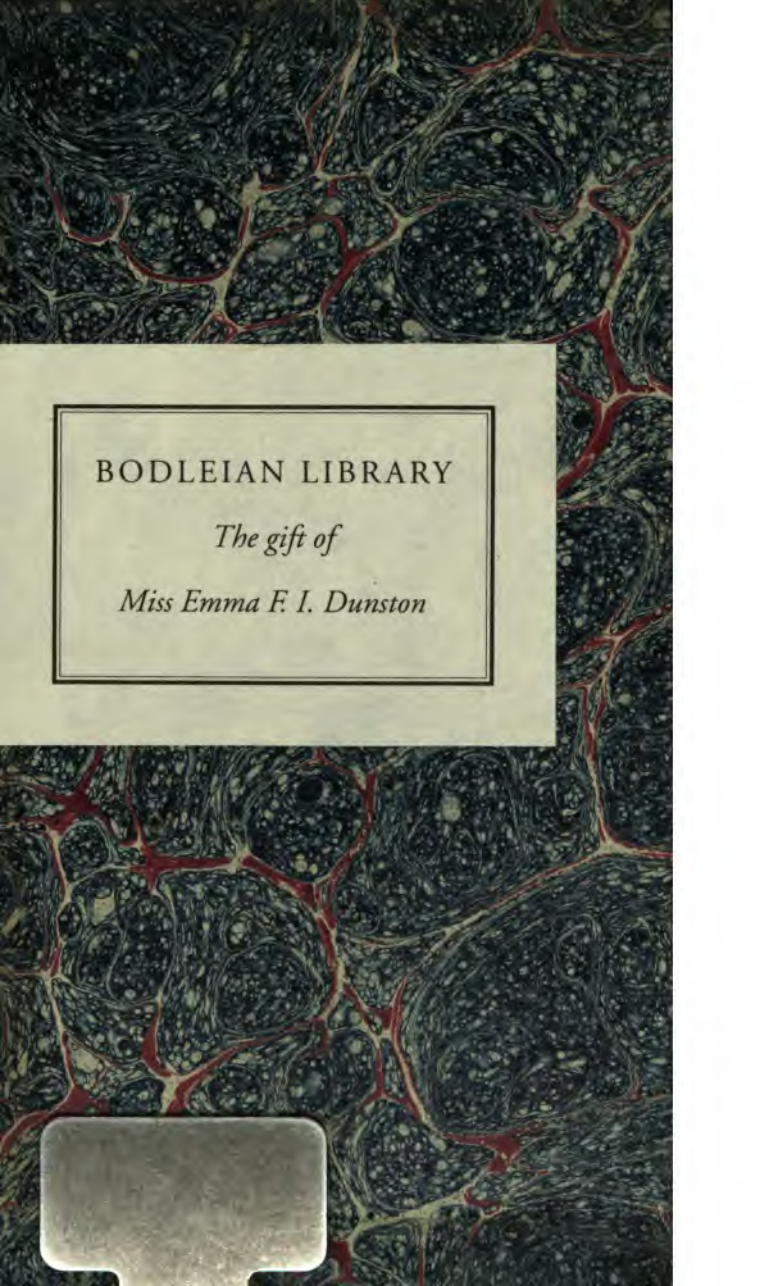
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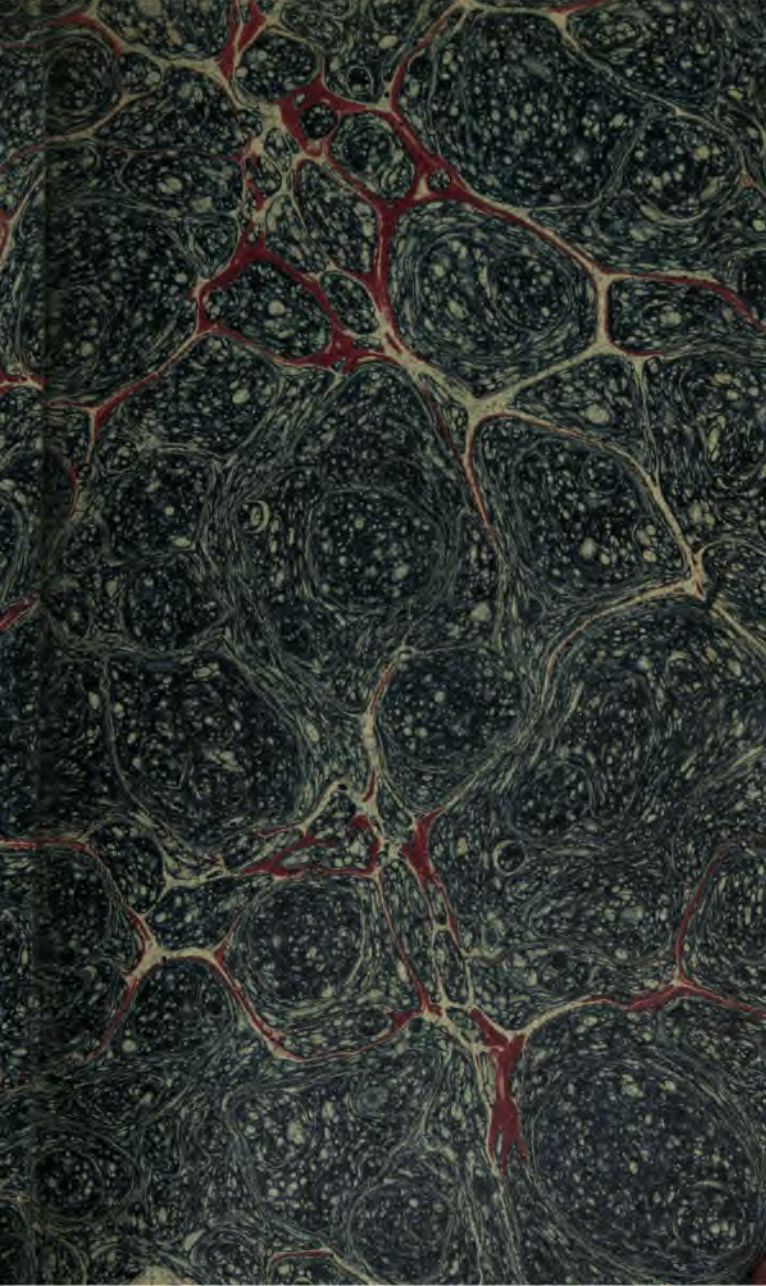


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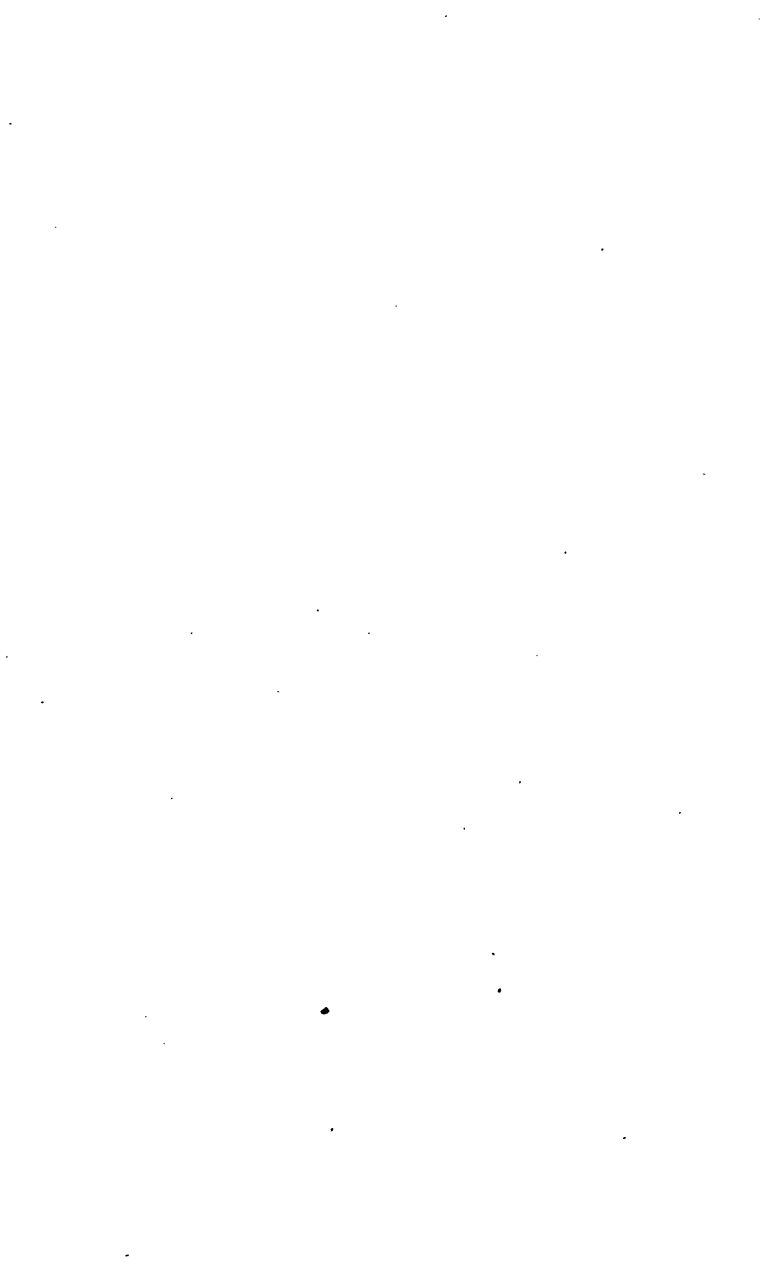
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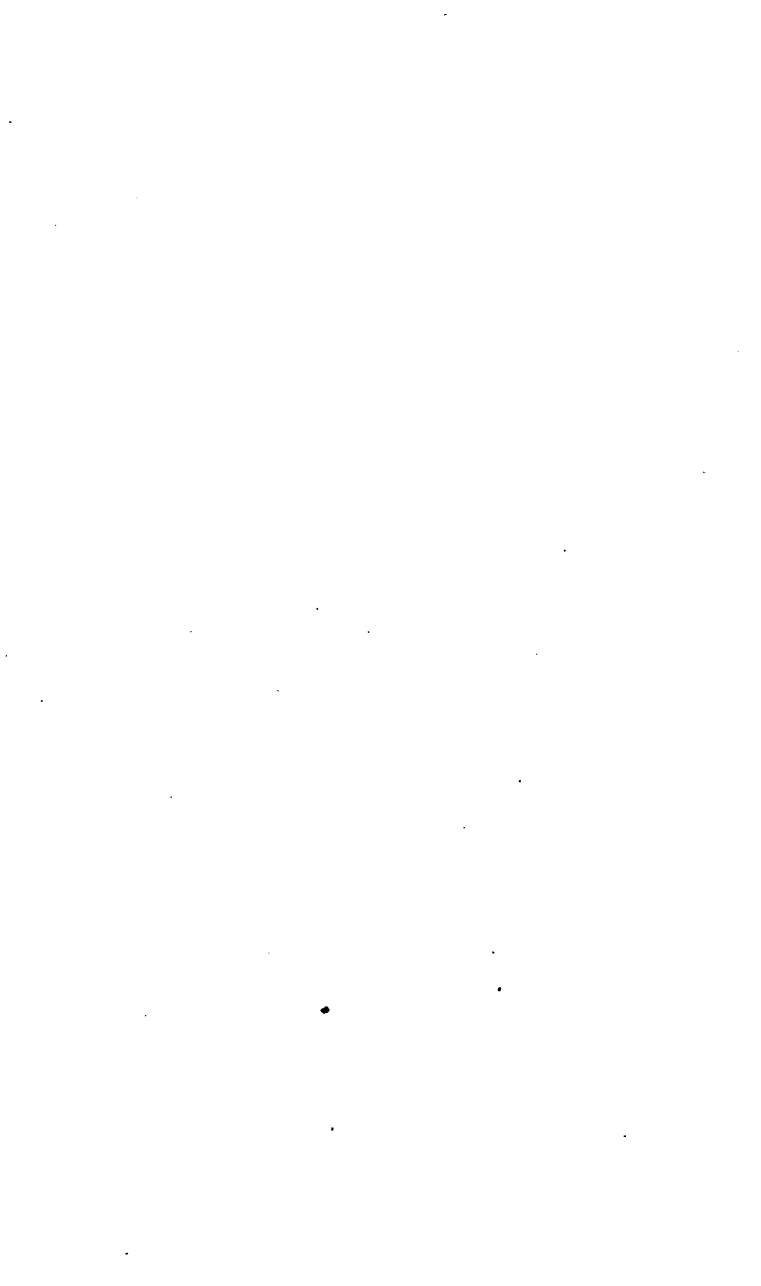




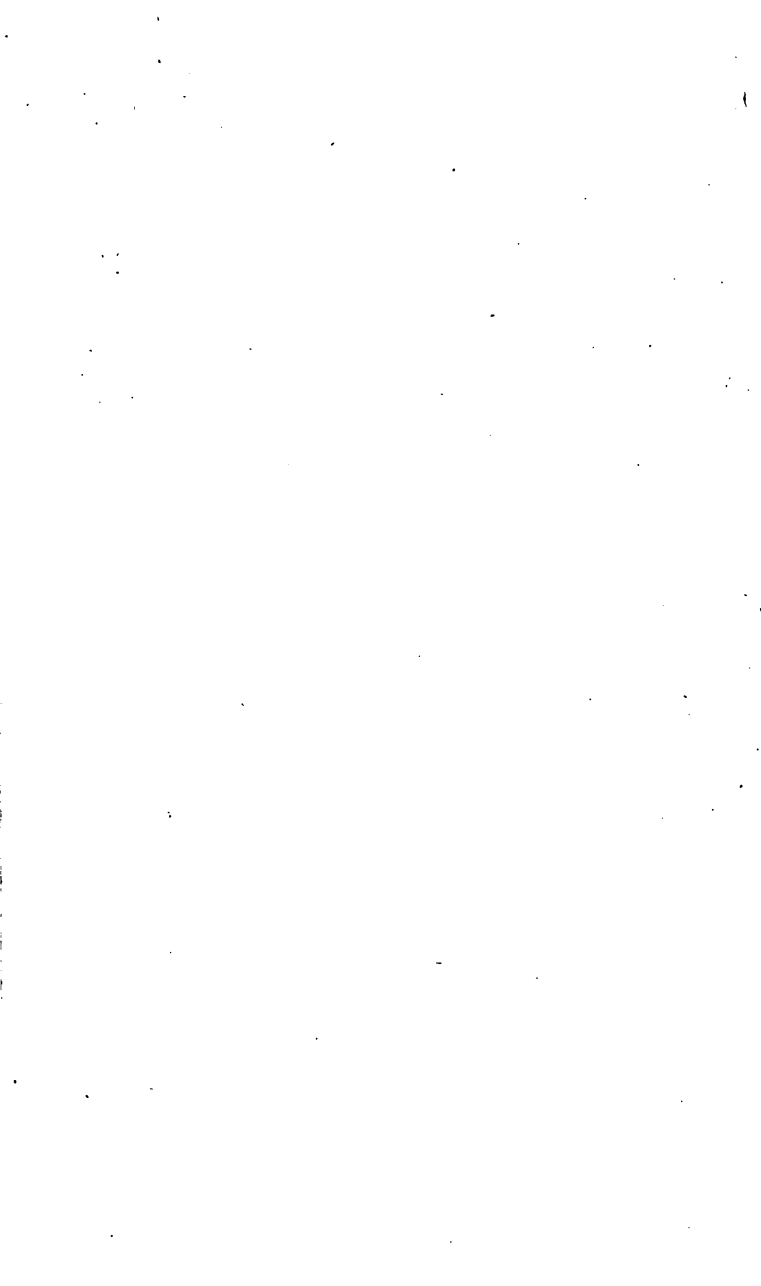


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A
LETTER
TO A
YOUNG LADY,
CONCERNING THE
PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT
OF THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY LAWRENCE JACKSON, B.D.
PREBENDARY OF LINCOLN.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

What right, what true, what fit we justly call,
Let this be all my care—for this is all :
Slow the unprofitable moments roll,
That lock up all the functions of my soul ;
That keep me from myself, and still delay
Life's instant business to a future day :
That task, which as we follow, or despise,
The oldest is a fool, the youngest wife,
Which done, the poorest can no wants endure,
And which not done, the richest must be poor. *POPE.*

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**1818.**



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TO THE  
S O C I E T Y  
FOR  
PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

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GENTLEMEN,

THE occasion of this small piece was exactly what the title-page, and the whole face of the Letter declare: the request of a young lady in a family, with which I have the pleasure of a very near connection, to send her my thoughts



on a religious conduct of life; and particularly, to assist her apprehensions, and guide her behaviour in her approaches to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Letter was received with, perhaps, too partial an approbation, where it was sent: it was spoken of and communicated to some, and desired by others: and the author was from thence led to supersede the trouble of frequent transcribing by a publication of it, rather in compliance with the judgment of others, than his own. However, if the giving a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward; the honest disinterested design of promoting the purposes of religion,

religion, in any the least manner, as in the little sketch here offered, may hope for pardon, and farther it does not hope, from the candid and the good. These loose sheets therefore, which cannot deserve praise, and do not desire it; which cannot be less valued by others, than they are by the writer; do not thrust themselves forward to public view, upon a conceit of any thing new or extraordinary in them. Religion is the oldest thing in the world: it is sober, uniform, modest; and novelty disguises or debases it more, than affectation of dress or motion does a really fine person. Religion is not only the earliest, but the most interesting concern of mankind, and

†

has

has accordingly engaged the learning and study of men, in all ages, to describe and adorn it. If the many treatises, which may seem to have exhausted the subject, had prevented the labours of succeeding persons, because nothing new was left to be said upon it; the Christian world had wanted many excellent works, illustrating the duties of life, and forcibly persuading to the practice of them. Though true religion be the same at all times, and in all places, yet the methods of explaining, recommending, and attaining the great ends of it, may be as various as the turn and cast of mind in men; as different as their situation, age, and complexion.

Strength

Strength of reason, depth of science, the search of antiquity, have fixed Christianity on that rock, which is proof against the rudest attacks: and yet to all people, and always to be proving, may not be the happiest, at least, it is not the only method of promoting the interests of religion, and recommending it to practice. Some things strike by their own native light; and there are persons, who want no more than to be shewn the naked beauty and ease of piety and virtue, in order to see the reasonableness of them, and bow their affections to embrace and follow them. The author therefore has taken one thing for granted, and that is, the truth of the Bible, which

has

has far greater evidence, of its authenticity and divine original, than any other book, ancient or modern, under the sun ; and from thence has been enabled to give the true idea of the Supreme Being, from whence flow naturally all the outlines of a religion, the most suited to private happiness and public welfare, consistent with, and promotive of, the business, the converse, the innocent enjoyments of life in societies, into which God has distributed mankind, and where the light of religion has the fairest opportunities of shewing its splendor, and bringing glory to God ; on earth peace, good-will towards men. For the practice of all religious duties springs from, and will

will always be correspondent to, the idea of God its object, and as this is right or wrong, that will be the one or the other; and will be vigorous or languish, in proportion to the presence and force of that idea on the mind: and there is so close a connection between these things in nature and fact, that if our conceptions of the Deity do not lead us to endeavour to please and be like him, we may be sure, that either he is not in all our thoughts, or our lusts have made him appear such as we would have him, and like ourselves. I have done, when I have given the reason of my address of these papers to your Society, which is, to express my great regard to it,

and

and my ambition of contributing my mite of every kind to its benevolent and glorious undertaking of promoting Christian knowledge, that is, of promoting the true happiness of mankind here and hereafter.

I am, with the greatest respect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble servant,

LAW. JACKSON.

A  
LETTER  
TO A  
YOUNG LADY,  
CONCERNING  
THE PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN LIFE.

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MADAM,

I AM going to write to you on the subject of religion; and I cannot make a greater compliment to your understanding, than by saying, I do it at your own request. I confess at the same time, that I am not disinterested in my present employment, but consult myself, as well as you in it; for if I can any way promote your happiness, I am sure so far to advance my own. I shall give you my  
B thoughts



thoughts as they rise, in the liberty of epistolary writing, without any regard to systems and opinions, or any books, besides those of nature and God; I mean, the constitution of us and all things about us in the world, and the revelation of the perfections and will of God in the bible.

It may justly seem more odd, that one of your years should desire to be entertained, than that one of mine should attempt to entertain you with things, in common estimation, so dry, so unsofiable, so irksome and melancholy, as religious duties, methods of holy living and dying, the joys of a good conscience, the expectation of, and constant preparation for, a solemn tribunal, and a consequent immortality. But this is the first error of judgment, which I must desire you not to admit; or to divest yourself of it as soon as possible: otherwise you will be shocked at unamiable pictures of a beautiful original, drawn by the hands of the interested or unskillful. For  
religion

religion has suffered much misrepresentation, both from her well and ill wishers. Vice and folly have conspired to deform her portrait, and men have mixed their own humours and caprice, in colouring and disfiguring the lovely image. The libertine exhibits her as an imaginary goddess, the creature of fancy or craft, a tyrant over the reason and liberty of mankind, and as great an enemy to freedom of thinking, as freedom of acting. The hypocrite shews her with a solemn outside, like his own, but with nothing within, besides art and deceit. The wild enthusiast throws her into starts, distortions, convulsions, and all the postures and freaks of a heated brain, and so makes her fitter to be an inhabitant of bedlam, than to frequent the walks of reasonable creatures. The moping anchoret paints her agreeably to his own cast of mind, sullen and morose, her face puckered with wrinkles, her eyes sunk in ever-streaming tears, with scourges in her hand, attired in sackcloth, enjoining successive penances

#### 4 LETTER TO A YOUNG LADY.

to her miserable votaries, exiled from human society, the doleful prisoner of a tub, a cell, or a cloister. Again, the furious zealot introduces her with fury in her looks, and fire and faggot in her arms, blindly making havock among mankind, and cruelly thinning the human species. Thus has religion, like its author, been defamed, reviled, hated, condemned and crucified, but between more than two malefactors.

Away then with this hideous, injurious, lying phantom. View not religion and its kind offices, with the eyes of a prejudiced senseless world, but with the reason and experience of the best and enlightened part of mankind; and then you will see her in the truest, that is, the most amiable form: you will no longer take misshapen dawkings for that original, which is in itself all beauty, sweetness, propriety and happiness: you will perceive goodness and duty, not the forced employment of a few dull moments, but the pleasing  
business

business of a whole life, a whole eternity; the improvement of every joy; the abatement of every anguish; the smiling companion and conductor of youth; the support and comfort of grey hairs and infirmity; consistent with all the work, relations, and pleasures of the present age, and leading directly to felicity and glory in that which is to come, and to last for ever. A king and a prophet traces up the parentage of religion to the celestial regions, makes her the daughter of the king of heaven, all glorious within, and her clothing of wrought gold. She is wisdom, the wisdom of angels and glorious spirits, and probably the privilege, the delight of all beings superior to the nature of man throughout the boundless stretch of creation, those rebellious only excepted, who fell from that and heaven together. The wisest and happiest of mere mortals puts length of days in her right hand, and in her left riches and honour: her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace: great peace have they who love and entertain her; while the enemies to her

6 LETTER TO A YOUNG LADY.

are enemies to themselves, like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Her portion is no less than the wealth of both worlds, the promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

You see, madam, great and glorious things are said of this offspring of God. Let us now examine, whether religion, and the christian religion in particular, answers the pomp of this description: let us consider it in its parts, deduce the rules of practice from the most natural principles, and aim at such a scheme of living, as may best suit the honour, the interest of an inhabitant of this world, and an expectant of a better.

+ For, after all, what is religion, but piety and virtue? The love of God, the love of man, and the love of ourselves? And you are born, you are framed, you are self-directed, to love the one and the other. You are safe, you are easy, you are happy, while you do this; you are unsafe, uneasy, unhappy, when you do not. Every depar-  
ture

ture from these duties is to the mind, what dislocations and fractures are to the body; and you may as reasonably expect to walk secure and easy on a strained ankle, or broken leg, as to proceed with satisfaction or peace, out of the paths of piety and virtue. You cannot know and consider God, but you must love him; and you cannot love him, without endeavouring to conciliate and please him. You cannot help loving yourself: And you cannot know and love God and yourself, but you must be led to love your fellow creatures; and you cannot love them, without doing them as little mischief, and as much good, as you can. Thus things certainly are in theory and nature: why should they not be so in fact, and in every one's experience? +

Let us therefore first consider the nature of God, rudely sketched by reason and reflection, and perfected by express discovery from heaven: the result will shew the necessity, the propriety, the ease of piety, and all its offices. All nature

cries aloud through all her works, that there is a power, who made us and all things about us: and in this sense, the earth and heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work: one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another. And thus the invifible things of God are known by the things that are feen, even his eternal power and godhead; his exiftence before, and independent of, all things; and his power to erect fo ftupendous a fabric as that of the univerfe. We have in ourfelves intelligence and underftanding; and therefore this powerful being muft have it alfo; for he made us, and not we ourfelves; and in this fenfe, nothing can give what it has not in itfelf in a higher degree. The order, arrangement, and contrivance of all things give in their further evidence to this truth. As the creation is an argument of the power, the accommodation of the creatures is an intimation of the beneficent difpofition of the great Creator. The fun which lights, the verdure which fpreads, the fhowers which impregnate, the winds which cool, the plants which  
fhade,

shade, and the flowers which smile and adorn our habitation, express a good will to all sensible creatures ; and particularly to man, the only one among them, who appears capable of discerning and acknowledging the bounty.

But how acknowledge it? with what words, by what actions? fear and hope arise from the great idea of the lord of the universe : his greatness astonishes, oppresses the doubtful mind ; his scattered rays of goodness relieve the apprehension, and raise the heart to gratitude and duty. But how to express that gratitude, there is the difficulty. What is duty? what will please or displease such a being as God? The inquietude still increases in case of known, or supposed transgression and sin. Can God hear prayer? will he accept of praise, or admit of atonement? is he placable? is he merciful? wherewithal shall the distracted sinner come before his God? shall he slay thousands of rams, or pour out rivers of oil? shall he offer himself, or the fruit of his body for



the sin of his soul? he has shewn thee, O man; and happy is it for thee, that he has done so: he has shewn thee his own nature, as far as it concerns thee to know it; and thy own duty, as far as it concerns thee to do it. He has shewn thee thy own history, interest, and obligations; thy disease, thy remedy; thy condition in this life, and what awaits thee in another. He has shewn it in those sacred books, which he caused to be written and preserved for thy direction and comfort, and whose authority is ascertained by all the signs, which the divine power could give for a rational assent. For holy men of old spake not of themselves, but as directed by the spirit of truth: and thus all scripture was given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This oracle of God supersedes inquiry, and resolves all our anxiety; fixes the end of man, and the means to obtain it; fills up  
the

the void in our idea of the Supreme Being, displays the circle of his perfections, and from thence draws out the master lines of piety and virtue. We need not, as the philosopher of old, require one, then two, then more days, to find out what is God : we need not say, who will go up to heaven, or down to the deep, to bring us the important information : it is all written in large and distinct characters, which he, who runs, may read, and he, who reads, may understand.

Is the question then, What is God? The answer is plain and satisfactory. He is a spirit, whom no man hath seen at any time, or can see ; dwelling in light, which no one can approach ; almighty in power ; infinite in wisdom ; just and true in all his ways ; every where present, witness to the most secret thoughts, about our bed, about our path ; and spying out all our ways ; holy, and separate from sinners, but making much of them, who love and serve him ; the high and lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity, dwelling also with him ; who is of a contrite and humble spirit ;

*His*  
 the maker of the world, and the governor of it too; and that with so particular a providence, that the most inconsiderable animal is the object of its attention; but man much more than the beasts, the fowls, and the flowers; and good men, in a still more peculiar manner: the father, as well as lord of his creatures, not greater in majesty, than rich in mercy; love itself, giving all good things, and forgiving transgression; knowing whereof we are made, and indulgent to infirmity: the hearer of prayer, to whom therefore all flesh shall come; declaring himself honoured by praise and thanksgiving, the observance of his sabbaths, and other appointments for the purposes of holiness: who has given us a law which should not be broken, and will one day, but in mercy, judge, acquit or condemn us according to it, by the man whom he hath appointed, Christ Jesus, by whom also he made and redeemed the world.

For this great and glorious being has discovered his existence to admit of a plurality

rality of persons, included in and consistent with the unity of the divine nature, distinguished by different operations, and the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be worshipped, served, and adored in all his capacities and modes of existing. The second of these divine persons became man, and undertook the recovery of the human species from a state of sin, misery, and death, to holiness and immortality; the one mediator between God and man, the only name under heaven by which we can be saved. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, to the end that all, who believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. In consequence of this mediation, the third divine existence, the holy spirit, is poured out on all flesh, and so acts upon the spirits of men, as to raise them to a power of knowing God, and working righteousness, to a likeness of God, to a fitness for nearer approaches to him in the regions of bliss and glory, where are many mansions, which the Sa-  
 viour

viour is gone to prepare for his faithful followers; that hope which cannot make them ashamed; their great expectation, their everlasting reward. Thus exists, <sup>4</sup> and thus acts the supreme being, unfearchable by us in his nature as well as his doings; and is to be believed to be, what he has declared himself to be, if we allow him the knowledge of his own nature; and is to be obeyed and served agreeably to that nature, unless we deny him propriety in his discoveries, wisdom in his appointments, and power to enforce them. And thus you discern in what manner the gift, the pure, the great, the unmerited gift of God is eternal life: while the service of sin is drudgery and shame; its present portion a fearful expectation of judgment, and its wages death: a debt due to it in the nature of things, which God seems obliged in justice to pay, and which he has accordingly declared he will pay to the uttermost farthing.

Such

Such is the christian's God, incircled with a glory of perfections, all exerted in favour of man, and existing in a trinity of persons, each of whom is concerned in his exaltation and happiness. And sure a greater, a fairer, a more lovely idea cannot enter, fill, delight and raise the human mind. It must be pleasure, more than common pleasure, to entertain and dwell upon it: it must be insensibility of joy to lose sight of it, and remember every thing, except what is alone worth remembering: for the idea of God, like himself, makes a heaven wherever it resides.

The first duty then of piety to God, is to remember and think upon him: to remember now the Creator in the earliest days, the days of vigour and pleasure, when the remembrance will be most graceful, most useful, and form habits which will be the guide of youth, and the comfort of age. We are formed for this duty, as we are the only visible creatures

16      LETTER TO A YOUNG LADY.

creatures capable of performing it: our understanding and faculties were given for this purpose; and they cannot be employed for a better. To neglect or delay to think of God is a departure from nature, as well as happiness: the remembrance of him will form your taste, secure your virtue, assimilate your spirit to the divine, set you above baseness, corruption, fear and torment, and fill you with all peace and joy in believing and acting. It is a duty as easy, as it is pleasant and useful to be performed: it is an act of religion which is portable, and may always go along with us; the companion of busy and vacant hours, suited to all occasions, times, and places: it will attend your going to bed, and your rising from it; exclude solitude when you are alone, and make your conversation not less innocent and entertaining when you are in company: your walk will not be less pleasant for hearing, like the first parents, the voice of God in the garden, considering the variety of his bounty, the largeness

largeness of that opening hand which filleth all things living with plenteousness. While you are treading these paths, the flowers will spring under, and all nature bloom around you; and you will, like *Moses*, see the radiant deity in every bush, though it may not, like his, miraculously burn with unconsuming fire. If you are in danger, you will see your protector: if in joy and safety, your benefactor: if you are thinking a good thought, or doing a good action, you will behold the rewarder of your piety and virtue; if you are tempted to a bad one, your witness, monitor and judge. When you are disappointed or wearied with any pleasures of life, you will aspire to those which flow from the right hand of God; and you will relieve even the gloomy thought of death, with the chearful hope of a blessed immortality; since to such a one to die, is to go to live for ever with him with whom he has continually conversed, and to whom he has studied to be like. This is called, in the beautiful language of scripture,



scripture, walking with God, and acknowledging him in all our ways. The careless and wicked liver is the reverse of this happy character : he is uncertain, unsatisfied, uneasy ; and no wonder ; for God is not in all his thoughts : he therefore walks in some vain shadow or other, and disquieteth himself in vain, and is without hope in his death. But the wise and good sets God always before him : he is on his right hand, therefore he shall not fall ; moreover his glory rests in hope. It is to keep up this happy remembrance of the supreme Being, that all the institutions, appointments, and offices of religion were invented and enjoined ; they were given for this very purpose ; they are all designed for, and serve excellently and naturally to it.

Of this sort is prayer : petition for what we want, thanksgiving for what we have. If you ask what it is ; it is the language of the mind, expressing our real sentiments and desires : it is the inward address of our spirit to God, who is a spirit, .  
visible

visible only to the eye of the soul, of no shape, form, or likeness of any thing you have seen, and therefore not to be conceived under any. He is therefore to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. If you really feel the desires and sentiments you offer, they are seen, they are heard, whether you express them in words or not. Words are necessary in your addresses to men, because they cannot know your wants and thoughts without them; but not so to God, who is mocked, and not addressed to at all in any form of speech, unless accompanied and informed with the real feeling and action of the heart and soul. Forms of prayer are no otherwise necessary, than as they direct the memory of the suppliant in a method, which he has received or contrived, for pouring out his soul, and expressing his ordinary necessities, his constant wishes to God: if they degenerate into a thing of course, if they are unanimated by the attention of the understanding and the affections of the heart, they are a mere lip-labour, and you may as well expect to be  
accepted

accepted for telling over so many sticks, or picking so many straws, as by ever so much or so often such speaking. However, the addresses to men, on all occasions, may help you to the true notion and estimate of those to God. If you are under a want or an anguish, which another can relieve, you supplicate, you beseech him in the strongest terms you can : if you are under the sense of a multitude of obligations, your heart overflows with a gratitude, which your looks and words labour to express to your kind benefactor : and thus you are to do to God in all cases. Your anguish, your distress, if not felt, would not meet with relief ; nor your thanks, if not hearty, with acceptance from man or God : this only is the difference ; you may be a successful hypocrite to man, you cannot be so to God : you may deceive yourself and other people ; you cannot cheat him, who penetrates the inmost recesses of the soul, in whom you live, and move, and have your being. God indeed stands in no need of  
our

our petitions to inform, or our thanks to gratify him, being infinitely happy in his own glory, incapable of addition or diminution from any thing we do, or not do: but we stand in great need of both, to keep up a due sense of the deity on our minds, of our relation to, and dependence upon him; to form habits of conversing with him with whom we are for ever to live, or from whom we are for ever to die; to warm and refine the soul, and fill us with that joy in rational devotion, which angels feel in their station of glory and bliss. For believe me, a well-regulated fervent devotion, whatever at first sight it may be apprehended to be, is in its own nature, and will upon experience be found to be, the most exquisite delight of the human mind, whenever it opens our griefs or our joys, our desires, our wants, our acknowledgments, before the throne of grace, and beholds, with the faith of the first martyr on his knees, heaven opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

For

For these kind reasons, the gracious author of our being has permitted, has commanded prayer to be made ever unto him ; has appointed the form, and given the matter of it ; has made it the means of obtaining all we want, and avoiding all we fear ; has encouraged private addressees, by the promise of rewarding openly what is prayed for in secret to our Father in heaven ; and public, by engaging to be in the midst of two or three gathered together in his name, and for his worship. If we ask, we shall have, unless we ask amiss, in a wrong manner, or for a wrong end ; without really desiring to have what we ask, or desiring to have it, that we may consume it on our lusts and follies. The christian is not only encouraged to address to God, but to address him under the amiable character of *Father : Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we are made the sons of God ; *Father* of us and all men, and therefore *our Father* : the universal, the wise, the gracious *Father*, who will give even his own spirit to them  
that

that ask <sup>Him</sup> it, and all other good things, as far as they are good, and with-hold all evil things, as far as they are such to us; who will not bestow a serpent to sting, instead of a fish to feed his suppliant children; nor give poison, instead of meat, though they should be so indiscreet as to ask it: the *Father*, who has given the Holy Ghost to teach and raise devotion, and the Son of his love to be the mediator of it, and intercessor for us, that we may obtain whatever we justly ask in his name, and in belief of our redemption by him: the provident *Father*, who, to prevent our mistakes, has directed the first and unerring application to be made for spiritual and eternal gifts, the second for temporal, and always limited with submission to his superior wisdom and will: lastly, who has made our prayer an act of charity as well as piety, and ordered supplication to be made for all men, and promised it shall have its effect at the throne of grace. Therefore in the prayer taught by our Lord himself, you are led  
to

## 24 LETTER TO A YOUNG LADY.

to love all men as you love yourself, and to desire the same blessings for them, which you may desire for yourself: you are therefore directed to say, not *my*, but *our Father*, not give *me* only, but all mankind; give *us* the support, the bread, the forgiveness we want. The Lord's prayer may be looked upon as a compleat, though short form of prayer, when you have not time, opportunity, or fitness of disposition for a longer; and a model for making more enlarged forms, when you have. It may be opened and apprehended by some such paraphrase as the following.

*Our Father*: the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have the adoption of children, become the sons of God and heirs of salvation, and therefore come in filial assurance, saying, *Abba, Father*; the peculiar father of us, and also of all men, who have entered into covenant with him by faith and baptism; the God, the Father of us all, *our Father: who art*  
*in*

*in Heaven*: who makest heaven by thy presence, who deckest thyself with light as with a garment, who dwellest amid the perpetual splendor of thy own perfections, round whom thousands and ten thousands of blessed spirits wait and minister, and who yet disdainest not to hear and accept the service and prayer of the meanest of thy creatures: eternal, gracious God, *hallowed be thy name*: all reverence, honour, and acknowledgment be paid to thy name, thy nature, thy appointments, which can be paid by creatures to their God, by children to the wisest and best of parents: mayest thou not only be worshipped, but obeyed by us, and all the rational world: may *thy kingdom come*: mayest thou reign in our hearts, be visible in the world, and shine out in the due performance of all the offices of religion, in the society of christian people, that body of which Christ is the head: may *thy will be done* by us and all christian people, *in earth as it is in heaven*; with the same resignation, delight, and gratitude, by me, and all the disciples of Jesus on earth, as



by angels and superior beings in heaven. *Give us this day our daily bread*: or rather, as it should be rendered, give us day by day the bread necessary for us, feed us with food convenient for us, in that proportion, which thy wisdom shall direct, and in that state of life, in which it shall please thy providence to place us: thou, who hast promised, that seed-time and harvest shall not fail, who waterest the furrows of the earth, and bledest the increase of it; who canst command the stones to be bread, or make our bread stones, canst make our food our nourishment, or our disease; let us daily be supported by thy bounty, and let our souls continually bless thee for opening thy hand, and filling all things living with plenteousness and joy. *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us*: may I and all christians be placable and forgiving to all our fellow-creatures, in the proportion that we want and desire forgiveness for ourselves from them and thee; and thus fulfil the condition, on which thou hast suspended thy own mercy: forgive our  
omission

omission of good, our commission of evil; pardon our bad actions, and the imperfection of our best; keep us in innocence, or, in case of forfeiture, grant that repentance, which thou hast promised to accept. Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults: keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me; so shall I be innocent from the great offence. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer. *Lead us not into temptation:* thou, who knowest whereof we are made, suffer us not to be tried, to be tempted above that we are able, but proportion our duty to our strength, our abilities to our post; if thou givest temptation, give a way to escape, or overcome it, that we may be able to bear it. *Deliver us from evil:* moral and natural, sin and misery; and particularly from that evil one, the rebel to God, the enemy to man, the tempter, of whose devices thou hast not left us ignorant;

give us the whole armour of God, to enable us to withstand him ; let thy Holy Spirit counteract all his suggestions, make us a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. We ask this, and all other blessings, in full faith of thy power to dispense them, in joyful assurance of thy goodness to grant them : *for thine is the kingdom* ; the right of dominion over all thy creatures : *thine the power* ; to assert that right, and do whatever pleaseth thee, in heaven, in earth, and in all deep places : *thine the glory*, to execute this power, in wisdom, justice, and mercy, beyond the bounds of place and time, *for ever and ever* : and therefore glory be to thee O Lord most high ! peace on earth, and good-will towards men.

I have given this little paraphrase, in order to enable you to judge of, and chuse a proper form of devotion, when you are disposed to use any : and I chose thus to unfold the parts of the Lord's prayer, because it is always to be used as part,

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or whole of every prayer ; because our Lord says in one place, when ye pray, say, our Father, &c. And also it is the model and example, to which all our more enlarged forms must be agreeable ; because in another place, it is said by the same divine teacher of prayer, after this manner pray ye. Daily prayer is enjoined by this, which is a petition for daily bread : and daily prayer, like this, must consist of a sense and acknowledgment of the divine attributes and favours, and our dependence on them ; must contain petitions on behalf of ourselves and fellow creatures, for support and pardon, for protection under, and deliverance from evil ; for direction of our ways, for the order and peace of the world, and that the knowledge of God and Christ may spread as wide over the earth, as the waters cover the sea ; and all for the merit of Jesus, the only name under heaven given to man by which he can be saved, the one mediator between God and man, by whom we have access to the father

30      LETTER TO A YOUNG LADY.

through one spirit, the spirit of the father and of the son.

It is likely you are already accustomed to some form of prayer, which may serve your purpose: if you have not a better, I believe you may safely use the paraphrase I have given you above: you may find very good forms in *Nelson's Devotions*: and I have added at the end a prayer, which is offered for your daily common use, if it falls in with your turn of mind, and is found, upon trial, to assist your aspirations towards God. You may extract a form, perhaps as good as any in the world, from the daily service of the church, when you do not attend it in that place: and that you may not be at a loss, I will point out the manner of easily doing it. In the morning, while you are dressing, suppose you repeat to yourself the morning hymn, which begins,—we praise thee, O God, &c. or, O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands, &c. That, when dressed, you begin your application  
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to God by the general thanksgiving ; add the collect for the day with the two next following in the morning course ; then may come in the prayer of intercession for all conditions of men, with the short collect annexed, and the conclusion may be the Lord's prayer. You may serve yourself in the same book at night, in the following order,—First say the general confession, or the confession in the communion service, beginning, almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. add the three collects of the evening course, then use, as before in the morning, the prayer of intercession and the general thanksgiving, and conclude with the Lord's prayer. You may enlarge at pleasure, by adding any other collects or prayers, which shall suit your occasion, your time, or disposition : and variety of forms, provided they are not mere forms, may recommend and heighten devotion. Indeed, you can never want the best, the richest helps to piety, public or private, while the Common Prayer Book is in your hands, the wise collection

of the best men, for the use of the best constituted church in the world. There is not a grace, which its collects will not furnish the form of asking, or a point of belief or practice in the christian life, which its epistles or gospels will not set before you. Its hymns and daily service of psalms are sober rapture, the language inspired by, and best suiting a conversation with and in heaven. An office presents itself for the expression of public or private humiliation: in another the sick find the advice and intercessions proper for them; the dying all that can comfort their departure; the surviving all that can prepare them for it. The general litany, which is the deprecation of all evils spiritual and temporal, and supplication for all orders and conditions of men, may with great propriety and benefit, mix with, or take place of your ordinary prayers on *Wednesday* and *Friday* mornings, when you have not an opportunity of using it in a still better manner, in the public congregation, or in the worship of a family: the breaks in it keep alive the  
attention

attention and fervor of mind; too apt to be diverted or cooled in a continued series of petitions: and both the matter and manner of it will excellently serve to diversify your holy offices, and make your supplications ardent, as well as just.

I have mentioned morning and evening for the stated, because most natural, retired, and easy seasons for prayer, beginning and ending the day with God, and so making the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise him, after the example of the best men. The sacred writings have commanded prayer; but left the times and frequency of it to ourselves. But the ingenuous christian will not be negligent, because he is free; but for that reason, will be more industrious to make opportunities for devotion, than fond of finding out excuses for declining it. Indeed, there is a direction to pray without ceasing; which can however mean no more, than such a devout turn of mind, as is ready to see and acknowledge God on all occasions, and so falls in with that



remembrance of God above recommended, which sanctifies and raises our indifferent actions into religious performances; and thus, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all to the glory of God: or else, it means praying constantly and regularly at certain seasons set apart every day for that purpose, without suffering indolence or trifles to interrupt our course of piety. And if some seasons or parts of a day are to be destined to this employment, none seem better adapted to it, than the beginning before we enter the world, and the conclusion when we quit it. I should wrong your apprehension, if I could think words necessary to persuade you, that I am not here imposing upon you an impracticable, or an uneasy course of duty. You will not set down with less relish to your breakfast, you will not less enjoy the conversation of your friends, or go through the business or pleasures of the day, with a worse grace, or less taste, because you have spent fifteen or twenty of the first minutes of it, in securing an interest in your Maker:

nor

nor will your sleep be much delayed, or less sweet, for having spent a like portion of time, before you enter upon it.

If I did not apprehend discouragement to my fair pupil, I should advise her to accompany daily devotion with daily self-examination. Be not frightened at the name: the thing will be delightful to you if you live well; and useful, if you in any respect live otherwise. For I mean no more by daily self-examination, than a serious recollection for a few moments, of the passages of the day. If you have avoided any bad, or done any good action; if you have subdued a passion, escaped a danger, received a favour; it will naturally make a part in your general thanksgivings for divine blessings: if you have in any particular offended against the law of God and your own mind; it will be thought of in your general confession of sins, be deplored, amended, and then forgiven: if you have met with any instance of distress, you will not fail to remember it, while you are interceding

for all forts and conditions of men. They are long accounts, in all parts of life and business, which perplex the head, sadden the heart, and ruin all our affairs: short ones, especially with our God, are kept most easily, and most effectually; they neither confound with their number, nor sink with their weight; they require little labour, are done in little time; they are a constant rational preparation for the most solemn ordinances of religion, and all the incidents of life; nay, of death and judgment, when the book of God, and of our own conscience, will be found to be one and the same, and we shall hear the things read out of it, not with surprise and horror, but with joy and transport in the presence of angels and men.

These religious offices are part of every day's employment: but there is by divine appointment, one day in seven, of which God and religion are the chief business, the proper, the commanded employment. You will easily understand, that I speak of the christian sabbath, or our Sunday.

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The Creator of the world reserved this portion of our time to himself, ever since the beginning of the world, which he made in six days, rather than in any other number, purely to give an example and sanction to the observance of a seventh, lasting as nature, and the history of its original. The men before the flood were taught to observe this day, in memory of the creation; and those after it, in memory of that, and of their redemption from the slavery of *Egypt*; and christians, in honour of a much greater redemption, from sin and death to the heavenly rest in life and immortality. God lays so strong a claim to this portion of time, that it is sacrilege to rob him of it; and he always condemned and punished it accordingly. The honour of his sabbaths he calls the honour of himself; and the neglect and profanation of them by the *Jews*, is set down as the principal cause of a captivity, commensurate to the years of that neglect; and they were not restored from it, till they had kept their mournful number of sabbaths in a strange land. The uses of this kind  
appointment

appointment will justify the stress laid upon it. It is a sabbath, a breathing time, a day of rest from the drudgery of life for the whole creation, for man and beast : and therefore he is rebellious to the beneficent designs of providence, who unnecessarily deprives either of this gracious indulgence. Works of necessity indeed are allowed on this day ; and works of mercy adorn it ; for we are to remember to keep it holy, that is, separate from worldly employment of the head, or the hand ; and devoted to thoughts and works of a spiritual, and more concerning nature ; the contemplation and adoration in private, and the public acknowledgment and worship of the Creator and Redeemer of the world in the solemn assemblies, which have been settled on that day, perhaps, ever since the beginning of time. The mind then, that perpetual shop and thoroughfare of contrivance, imaginations, and trifles, must be shut, as well as the public markets for business ; and the inward, no more than the outward temple of God, is to be made on that day a house of merchandise,

or

or improper amusement. We cannot perform any true service to God, without taking pleasure in it: and we cannot take pleasure in this day, without saying with him in the psalms, this is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoice in it: I will go into the courts of the Lord's house, I will praise him in the seat of the elders, and before much people. Duty will lead you to the honest, reasonable, and chearful observance of this day, and profit and pleasure will arise from the nature of a due observance, and the promise of the God of sabbath. Hear his own description of the method and reward of this branch of piety, and apply confidently to yourself, what was said to *Israel* on the occasion. *If thou turn away thy foot on the sabbath from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath, a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thy own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon*

*upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

I would recommend to you the reading of the Bible, as particularly becoming this time of leisure from reading common books; which, though innocently amusing on other days, are impertinent on this; which, though improving in other knowledge, have nothing to do with the wisdom of religion. The majesty of a divine revelation, the command of him who gave it, the interests we have in it, the curiosity gratified in its discoveries, the usefulness of its rules of conduct, the law of which it is the code, the privileges and blessings of which it is the charter; all conspire to render the perusal of the sacred volume necessary and delightful. It is divided into books and chapters, and you may consult your time, convenience, and strength of attention and memory, in reading what portion of them you shall find useful to you. If you proceed in order, which I think the best way for private use;

use; you will find in the first book of your Bible, the oldest, truest, and most entertaining history of this our world, of the creation of all things, of the birth of your species, of its innocence and happiness, succeeded by transgression and misery, and its deliverance from both by the mercy of God. You will see the Saviour of men promised in paradise, and marked out for the expectation of all successive ages: You will see, in the following books, a people selected, a family specified, from whence he is to descend: you will be entertained and instructed, by the laws, policy, and history of that people, under their judges, prophets, and kings. In the poetical books of *Job* and the *Psalms*, you will read the most animated descriptions of God and nature; such images and paintings, as raise the soul above itself, and furnish it with thoughts and words suited to all occasions of conversing with the majesty of heaven. You may discern, in the moral books of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiastes*, more refined observations on life, and better directions for the conduct of it,

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than in all the boasted treasures of philosophy and learning. In the prophets you will behold all the unerring tokens of divine inspiration, the highest elevation of thought, the greatest energy of expression, where the almighty speaks in thunder and clouds, and sometimes is heard in all the graces of the small still voice: you will read the fates of empires and states of the world described, long before their existence; persons called by name and destined to employment, hundreds of years before they were born; the Messiah prepared for all through the Old Testament, and at last, in the fulness of time, disclosed in the New: where you will peruse his uncommon birth, his life of miracle and goodness, the ignominy of his death, the glory of his resurrection; his own mighty acts, and those of his disciples and followers, and his promise of being with them to the end of the world: and the completion of that promise up to our own age, will be proper matter for your observation and wonder. You will there discern the true meaning of the old law,  
and

and the additions to it in the new; the ground of your faith and hope, the rules of your practice, your business in this world, and the certain expectation of a better in the regions of glory and happiness. You will probably find opportunity and inclination for this sort of reading, sometimes on other days; but you will be wanting to your own duty and improvement, if you neglect it on that, which I have been recommending the observance of, and which will always furnish leisure for it, without the least violence offered to the necessary and innocent refreshments of body, or mind.

There is a book, besides the Bible, which I could wish to have a place in every lady's, in every person's library and esteem: I mean that on the Festivals and Fasts of the Church by Mr. *Nelson*, who has had the happiness to unite the character of the gentleman and the scholar, the clearest head with the warmest heart, the graces of piety with those of good breeding: he does honour to the religious constitution of our country, sets our appointments in  
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the truest light, shews their conformity with the purest ages of christianity, and points out and persuades all the improvements intended by them.

The mention of a treatise on fasts, leads me insensibly, and almost undesignedly, to say something on the subject of self-denial and mortification; and particularly of fasting, as a counsel, if not an absolute command to the disciples of a crucified Master. I should be wanting in my duty to you, if I did not touch on this matter, and I have the example of our Lord for doing it tenderly, and accommodating myself to the state and age of the disciple. I must therefore here again intreat you not to start at the name and sound of a thing, which, when rightly stated, may appear to you the dictate of good sense, useful in some circumstances and degrees, and very consistent with the true enjoyment of life. It is the fondest infatuation of the world, that happiness lies in the constant gratification of our appetites and senses, for ever rising in their demands upon every compliance,

compliance, and like the ill-favoured kine of *Pharaoh's* dream, as lean and importunate after devouring the abundance, as before: but in the controul of our passions and inordinate affections consists really our greatness, and happiness too. The thirst of irregular ungoverned desires is the dropsy of the soul, perpetually growing with indulgence of it: the master of his affections, may be happy in all circumstances; the slave of them can be happy in none. The conquest of ourselves, who exist in a vitiated corrupt state of body and mind, the government of our passions, and the direction of our inclinations, are absolute duties of natural as well as revealed religion, constitute the essence of virtue and piety; and the task must be some way or other performed by the candidate for heaven and happiness, though to part with a favourite lust, may be as irksome and disagreeable, as cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. But let not my young correspondent apprehend my proposing the maiming or dismembering of the body, or whips or knives,

knives, or sackcloth or ashes, or any real hurt or discomfort of any part of her frame. The means of obtaining this regulation and command of ourselves, the aim of philosophy in every age, but the natural and solid effect of religion, and not attainable without its graces and assistances; differ infinitely, according to the infinite variety of persons and cases. Fasting with prayer is recommended by the author of our religion, who knew what was in man, as one means of obtaining this end; but without prescribing the degrees or times of it, with a wise regard to persons and seasons, and an allowance of discretion and propriety for its guide. Nature seems to lead to some sort of intermission of usual delights, and abstinence from the common gratifications of sense, on some occasions. Private and public sorrow abstract men, without any formal design, from the commerce of the world; they seek to retirement for relief, and forget and disdain the common food and comforts of life. And what is thus naturally expressive of grief and suited to it, christianity has taken in

as a proper method to express religious sorrow, arising from a sense of our faults and irregularities, and of the displeasure of heaven for these offences, and to give room for such sobriety of mind, as will lead to amendment of life. Accordingly our church has admitted times of fasting and abstinence for her children, and has pointed out some proper seasons for it: but like her great and good Master, neither prescribes the sort or degrees of it, but wisely leaves the judgment of this matter to the honest experience of all her communicants: she does not fantastically change one diet for another, perhaps equally or more delicious; she does not take upon her to determine upon the constitution or wants of particular persons. Some times may demand more, some less of the duty I am upon. I have divine warrant for this observation: the disciples, who did not fast often, like those of *John*, were told they should do it, when it should be more proper, when the bridegroom was taken from them, in the days of misery and persecution. Every person does not want,  
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some persons cannot bear, the same degrees of self-denial. The diet should be proportioned to the recipient: new wine for new bottles, and both are preserved. Meat may be to the strong, what milk is to those who are less so: the abstinence from a delicacy, on a principle of religion, may, in some cases, be more pleasing, than that from a meal: and a life of sobriety and temperance to some people may be more serviceable, than the greatest occasional severities to others. Upon the whole, you will think yourself concerned, at proper times and on proper occasions, to practice an abstinence in some shape or other, as prudence, your own wants, and decency, shall direct, in compliance with the advice of your Saviour, the custom of the best men in all ages of christianity, and in obedience to the orders of those whom God has set over you in that church, of which you have made yourself a member, and which has copied this practice of the primitive church in her liturgy and offices. By these sentiments, and this conduct, you will avoid wrong notions of the Deity,

Deity, who is not like *Baal*, delighted with cuttings and flashes, the miseries and pains of his creatures: you will neither over-rate these acts of mortification, as meritorious in their nature, which is the rankest superstition; nor by a total neglect of them as proper and useful on some occasions, throw a contempt upon a practice, warranted by the wise appointments of God and man, and, when rightly designed and conducted, often found successful with heaven, in the behalf of whole nations, and particular persons. You will never lose sight of the end of this, and all other offices of religion, and that is, godliness; and then you will never do amiss. You will consider this *bodily exercise*, as profiting; profiting, as it is accompanied with prayer, with temporary retreats from the amusements and company, as well as the meals of common life, and disposing to seriousness, reflection, and devotion: profiting, as a punishment for the sins, and a remedy for the evils of repletion and luxury: profiting, as a decent, as an appointed

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expression of sorrow in public, in private distresses, calamities, and wants; an act of piety, when performed on a principle of religious obedience; of charity, if what is denied to our own appetites is given to the real wants of our fellow-creatures: profiting thus far, and to these excellent purposes; but yet profiting little, for a short time and in a small degree, when compared to *godliness*, universal holiness and righteousness, which is the end of the commandments, and therefore has entailed upon it *the promises of the life which now is, and of that which is to come*. Thus you will judge and act for yourself in this particular: and in judging the practice of others, your candour may lead you to embrace the temper of an apostle's direction on the subject of religious eating and abstinence,—let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth.

There remains one necessary act of piety more, which is peculiar to the christian religion,

religion, and appointed by the author of it, as an instrument of union between Christ and his disciples, the head and the member, and of communion of the members with each other. You will readily perceive, I mean the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. Agreeably to your request, I shall endeavour to give you satisfaction in the reason and nature of the institution, inform your understanding in some particulars, and direct your practice in others, relative to this service.

The death and passion of Christ, and the interest we have in it, is a first and fundamental doctrine of Christianity: and a faith in this article is so necessary to all Christians, that, without faith in Christ, as the Redeemer of mankind, the ransom, the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, the reconciler of God to man, by whom alone we can have access to the Father, pardon of our transgressions, assistance of the Divine Spirit, and a right to immortality; no one can assume the

name of Christian, or pretend any title to all the benefits and graces of the covenant, or agreement, between God and man, and lodged in the hands of a mediator, called therefore the mediator of the new covenant: new, with respect to an older covenant; though, otherwise, as old itself almost as our world: for in this sense, Christianity is near as old as the creation. The first, or old covenant, was given to the two first parents of mankind: the terms of it were, that they should be continued in life and happiness, the favour and presence of God, in case of perfect obedience; but in case of disobedience, should forfeit all these blessings, and be consigned over to death and misery. A positive law was given for trial of obedience; and it was broken, through temptation; and the forfeiture of the charter of favours, and the penalty of death, were incurred. But God, in mercy, did not think fit to leave the first pair, and all their descendants, forlorn and desperate, without covenant or promise, destitute of comfort

fort in their life, and hope in their death. He made therefore a second covenant with the human species, called therefore a new and better covenant: but either in compliance with the demands of his justice, truth, and holiness, or the dictates of his wisdom, he made it on condition of satisfaction to be given him for past transgression, by a person willing and able to give it, and of merit sufficient to induce him to accept for the future such imperfect obedience, as fallen man was able to pay, and to renew to him the grant of immortality. The Son of God was pleased to undertake this office, and God the Father was pleased to admit the offer: and thus God gave his only begotten Son, that all, who believe and obey him, should not perish, but have everlasting life: and thus he is every where represented, as reconciling the world to himself in Christ. This Saviour and Mediator was, in proper time, to take our nature upon him; the seed of the woman in *Genesis*, the son of a virgin in *Isaiah*: he was to take our nature, that he might

suffer and die in it; that he might suffer and die in it for mankind. The prophets tell you, that he trod the wine-press of his father's wrath alone, that God laid on him the iniquities of us all, and by his stripes we are healed. The Gospels assure you, he did what was undertaken to be done; was born of the virgin *Mary*, suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, was crucified, dead, and buried, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God. Himself assures you, that he is the good shepherd, who layeth down his life for mankind, his sheep; that no man taketh it from him, but that he layeth it down of himself; that he hath power to lay it down, and power to take it again; and that he did all this by consent and command of his Father. This method of salvation by Christ, is the wonderful display of the nature and perfections of God, the study and astonishment of superior beings, the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in this world,  
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received up into glory. As the redemption of Jesus was universal, a ransom, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, reaching backwards to those who lived before his incarnation, as well as to those who are to follow it to the end of time, even to as many as will come to God by him; he is said to be the lamb slain from the foundation of the world: and as all ages have an equal interest in the great sacrifice of the cross, the religion of all ages has been settled with a view to it. The blood of beasts was shed in the old world, for a continual memorial of that blood, without which there is no remission; and to convey the benefits of it to the believing offerers, in every sacrifice before and under the law: and when the accomplishment of the great sacrifice of Christ was just going to supersede the use of such representations by blood; himself appointed bread to be broken and eaten, and wine to be poured out and drank, for the same purposes; namely, to be a perpetual memorial of his body broken, and blood shed, and to convey the benefits

of that body and blood, and all the blessings of the new covenant. For this is the plain history of this institution: the Saviour and Redeemer of men, the night before he suffered, celebrated the *Jewish* sacrifice of the passover with his disciples; which consisted in slaying and eating a lamb, in memory of the destroying angel passing over the doors of the *Israelites* sprinkled with the blood, and not killing the first-born of their children, as he was commanded to do in all other houses and families in *Egypt*: a peculiar emblem and image of the blood of Christ to be shed, who is therefore called our passover; and of the effects of it too, preservation from death and the anger of God. At the end of this service, representative of the bleeding sacrifice he was going to make of himself, and therefore of no proper use after it; he appointed another service without blood, and accompanied it with all the endearments of a dying friend, and with the promise of the greatest advantages, no less than the actual participation of the merits

merits of his death and passion, to those, who should hereafter piously and obediently observe it. For after he had sat down and eaten with his disciples, and declared he would no more eat of that paschal supper; he took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body, which is given for you; that is, this shall represent and be my body to you, and give you an interest in all the benefits of it; this do in remembrance of me; of me, going to have my body broken, as ye see this bread: likewise also he took the cup, saying, this cup is the New Testament, legacy, or covenant, in my blood; that is, it shall be to you the new covenant made in and through my blood, and give you a title to pardon of sins, for which it is going to be poured out. This is the service peculiar to Christianity, and this the history and nature of it: and that it is to be the standing service of all, who name the name of Christ, and claim an interest in his death, even to the end of the world, the Apostle assures us, when he says to the



*Corinthians*,—I have received of the Lord that, which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night, in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me: after the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me; for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

From this short, but plain and authentic account of the matter, you will easily learn all that is necessary to be known, believed, and done, in this sacrament of the Lord's Supper. You will know, that the bread broken, and the wine poured out in it, are to keep up the constant memory of the body and blood of Christ, broken and shed for your sins, and those of the whole world, and to apply, as the sacrifice of beasts did before, the beneficial

ficial merits of that sacrifice to all worthy receivers: and thus you will distinguish this action from common eating and drinking, and *discern* the Lord's body in it. You will call to mind, and stedfastly believe the doctrine of both Testaments, and the promises of God made to you in that sacrament; that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man, the only name under heaven by which we can be saved, and that there is no coming to God but through him, no reconciliation with heaven, but by the blood of the covenant; that there is no partaking of the benefits of that blood, but by communion with Christ, and no communion with him, but in the way of his appointment, and eating that bread, which he has instituted to be the means of conveying to us the merits of his body and blood; his body and blood, as really the support of spiritual life in the soul, as common food is of natural life in the body; and that thus, according to his own assertion, his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. You will think yourself strongly obliged to eat and

drink this sacred bread and wine, because your Saviour commanded it; commanded it in his last moments, with all the circumstances of love; commanded it, as the grateful memorial of a dying Saviour, and the means of obtaining salvation by him. You will think yourself concerned to do this, as often as you are called, and as often as you have opportunity; because as often as you do it, you do shew forth the Lord's death, till he comes; because God will look on this memorial presented to him, and remember his holy covenant, and give you all the graces and favours of it; and because you will look upon it yourself, and the sight will fill you with holy dispositions, pious sentiments, and raise in you the most useful and lasting gratitude, that of the heart and life. And thus you will discern this sacrament to be the natural and supernatural means of holiness, without which no one can see God, and of salvation and happiness by Jesus Christ.

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This knowledge, and this faith, will make you perfectly easy about the preparation for the due receiving this holy sacrament, which has filled many long and discouraging volumes. The scripture has said very little about it, but left it to be collected from the nature of the thing. *St. Paul* indeed, on occasion of some mistakes and irregularities crept into this service among the new converts at *Corinth*, incidentally mentions the duty of examining himself before a man presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; and adds, whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, as they certainly did, eateth and drinketh his own damnation; or, as it should be rendered, his own condemnation, the temporal judgments and punishments of God, in order to amend their abuse, and prevent their eternal damnation; as it is expressly there said,—For this cause, on account of this profanation of a holy service, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord: but when we

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are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. The case was this: the *Corinthians* celebrated the sacrament at the end of a repast in the church, furnished by the rich for the benefit of the poor, and therefore called a feast of love. By this means, pride and intemperance found a way into this holy ordinance, and mixed with, and disappointed the salutary effects of it. For the wealthy providers of the banquet, instead of charitably feeding their poorer brethren at a common table, proudly disdained them, sat down, and took each before the other his own supper, and to that degree of gluttony and contempt, that some were drunken, while others were hungry; and with this excellent preparation, they fell to eating the consecrated bread, as common meat, not *discerning* the Lord's body in it. For this cause God corrected some with sickness, and punished the incorrigible with death. This is a passage unworthy, you will surely see and say, to deter people, as it has done, and still does thousands, from coming

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ing to the holy table, and performing there a most necessary, easy, and safe service, enjoined to all by positive command. Can any one, in the present constitution of the church, and under the lights we now have of common sense, honesty, or decency, be under any apprehensions of committing the faults of these *Corinthians*, or incurring the penalty of such enormities? but to prevent it, let a man examine himself, whether he is in his right senses, whether he knows the destination of this feast to holy purposes, and whether he comes with such dispositions, as become the disciple and follower of a crucified master.

Away then, and let us never more hear of these, not reasons, but pretences for absence. Archbishop *Tillotson* justly observes, that the best preparation for receiving the sacrament, is a good life: and provided we have that, we need not be solicitous about any other. If you live the life, I have above recommended to you, you are always prepared to receive the sacrament;

crament; you may receive it at any time; you cannot receive it unworthily, you cannot receive it unprofitably. For there can be no preparation, peculiarly necessary for the sacrament, but what arises from the nature and end of it; and such preparation you will have practised every day of your life. The nature of the sacrament you have seen, is a devout remembrance of the meritorious death of Christ for the sins of mankind, designed to remove the guilt of past transgressions, and prevent future: you cannot therefore come sensibly or honestly to this ordinance, without confessing and resolving to amend the faults and errors of which you desire forgiveness, and for which Christ died: you cannot expect this forgiveness without believing the promises of the Gospel, and those particularly made to you in this sacrament: you cannot remember, in any religious sense, the exceeding love of your master and Saviour, thus dying for you, without being sensibly touched with sentiments of thanks, devotion, and love to him: lastly, you cannot remember the  
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extent of this redemption, but you must be forcibly led to look on all men, as brethren, as partakers of the same bread, children of the same father, the purchase of the same Saviour, whom we must love, if we pretend to love him; whom we must forgive, as we expect to be forgiven by him. These are the dispositions and qualifications of a worthy receiver of the sacrament, resulting from the nature and end of it, and all summed up in the excellent answer of the Church Catechism to that question,—What is required of them, who come to the Lord's Supper? to examine themselves, whether they repent them truly for their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; to have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and to be in charity with all men. But this will be no strange, laborious, or irksome work to you, who have set God always before you; no start or fit of devotion and melancholy for a week; or a month; but the reasonable and cheerful practice of every returning day. Ex-  
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amination can bear no frightful appearance to one, who has kept daily accounts with his Maker. Lively faith in God's mercy through Christ cannot be wanting to him, who reads and believes his Bible, and constantly and devoutly prays to, and thanks God for his wonders of creation, providence and redemption. And whoever each day heartily intercedes with God for the spiritual and temporal good of all his fellow-creatures, must find himself ever ready and disposed to do all the good he can to their bodies and souls, and so be in charity with all men.

Thus prepared, thus dressed in the true wedding garment of the Gospel, go cheerfully and assuredly to meet the bridegroom at his feast of love and grace. Be serious and attentive to all the parts of the communion service, and you will want no companion at the altar, besides your common prayer-book, to raise proper thoughts, and continue in you a proper frame of mind, during the whole performance. You need but read it carefully, and consider

sider it in all its parts, in order to perceive the usefulness of it for this purpose.

When the minister, after sermon, returns to the communion table, he reads such select sentences out of scripture, concerning the nature and benefit of piety, justice, charity, and alms, which are then collecting from the several communicants, as will raise in you that love of man, which is made the test of your love to God; and your mind cannot be employed on a better, or more christian subject. The prayer for Christ's church militant here on earth, is an exercise of universal charity, a solemn intercession for all orders and degrees of men, for magistrates and subjects, minister and people; for the due administration of the sacraments, for heavenly grace to all christians, particularly to the present congregation, and for relief of the several distresses of mankind; and concludes with a thanksgiving for those departed this life in the faith and fear of God, and so rises up into an act  
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of communion with the church triumphant in heaven. Raised from your knees you hear the exhortation, containing an invitation in God's name to all, who come to this feast with faith, repentance, thankfulness, and universal charity; assuring such, that they will spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, dwell in him, as he in them; and warning impenitent sinners, and uninstructed careless persons, not to approach it; lest they meet the fate of the hypocrite and blasphemer, not discerning the Lord's body, or prophaning it. The conclusion is a call to make your humble confession to Almighty God in the general words of the following prayer; in saying which, you may remember and deplore any particular errors of your life and conversation, which you are conscious of, asking and hoping full pardon of them, for the sake of the beloved Son, whose redemption of you you are going to commemorate. This confession is immediately followed by a recital of that absolution, which God has promised to all faithful and penitent sinners,

ners, and the minister's prayer, that it may be applied to all present: and to encourage their faith and hope in it, he recites the comfortable declarations of Christ and his apostles, concerning the love of God, the propitiation of his Son, relief and acceptance of those who come weary and heavy laden, and the gift of immortality to all true believers. You are then called upon to lift up your heart to thanksgiving and praise for these benefits, which at all times is meet, right, and our bounden duty, but especially at this time we are directed to join with angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven, in laud and praise of the whole Trinity, saying, holy, holy, holy. The minister then, in the name of himself and all the communicants, makes acknowledgment of their unworthiness to approach the table of the Lord, disclaiming their own righteousness and merit, and throwing themselves entirely on his manifold and great mercies, and beseeching to have their bodies and souls washed and cleansed by his body and blood, and to be for ever united to him,

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by the indwelling of his spirit. Then follows the prayer of consecration, wherein the minister, after having mentioned the fulness, perfection, and sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction on the cross for the sins of the whole world, and his institution of this sacrament in perpetual memory of it; acknowledges and offers bread and wine as the creatures of God, and then consecrates, that is, separates them from common use, for the holy purpose of representing and applying the body and blood of Christ, by repeating over them the same words, which our Saviour used at his own supper: after his example, takes bread and breaks it; takes the cup and blesses it. The sight of both these actions will set Christ crucified before your eyes, and you will discern, under these emblems, his body distended, torn, and broken, and his blood streaming, for the healing of the nations. The minister then takes the sacramental bread and wine himself, and next proceeds to deliver them to the several communicants, with these words,—*The body of our Lord Jesus*

*Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life: you may here say within yourself, amen, good Lord, be it unto me according to thy word: he goes on, saying take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee: here perform the act of remembering a Saviour, crucified for you in particular: he proceeds, feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving: here exert an act of faith in God's mercy and promises through Christ, and lift up your heart in praise to him for all the means of grace, and hopes of glory, the preservation of body and soul unto everlasting life. As you will not have full time to make these reflexions, and exercise all the acts of remembering, believing, and praising, while yourself are receiving; you may do all, one after another, while others are receiving in the same form of words; till the minister comes again, and delivers you the cup, saying, The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life: drink this in remembrance that*  
*Christ's*

*Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.* Where you have a like opportunity, while yourself and others are receiving, to remember, that Christ's blood was shed; to believe it was shed for you in particular; to praise God in your mind then, and resolve to do it in your life afterwards, for all the love he has shewed unto you. The rest of the time may be usefully spent in enlarging on any of the foregoing thoughts; and with particular propriety, when you hear the bread and wine delivered to any one, in praying, that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ may preserve the body and soul of that communicant unto everlasting life, and that you and they may be joined in the communion of saints, and the inheritance of glory. When all have communicated, you will leave your private thoughts, and heartily join with the minister in the Lord's prayer, and in that which follows, desiring God to accept this your sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, your bounden duty, and the offer of your soul and body to his service, not weighing your merits, but pardoning your offences; and that

that, by the merits and death of his Son, and through faith in his blood, you and all christians may obtain remission of sins, and all other benefits of his passion. And here you may imagine heaven opening, and pouring out its blessed hosts, to repeat with you their own song, while you are saying after the minister, glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men: we praise, we bless, we worship, we glorify thee O Father, Son, with the Holy Ghost. After this rapture and exaltation of soul, a short collect or two are repeated, and you are dismissed with a solemn blessing, ministerially pronounced in the name of the whole Trinity. I have thus gone over the several parts of the communion service, that you might apprehend the beauty and excellence of it, and have at hand an inexhaustible treasure of thoughts and desires most proper to employ the mind, and fill the time, at the celebration of the sacrament.



74. LETTER TO A YOUNG LADY.

Your good sense will direct you ; however let me not be wanting to advise you, to consider this and all the other holy offices above mentioned, as the most excellent means, but yet as the means only, to a farther most excellent end, the purifying the heart, the spiritualising the affections, the amendment and perfection of our nature : of no use to God ; and therefore of no use at all, if we are not ourselves made better by them. We may judge of ourselves then, as we are allowed to judge of other people, by their works, as of trees by their fruits. If these appointments, these religious services, produce no such fruits, there must be some mistake, or fault, in the performance of them : if the contrary fruits to these shew themselves in life and conversation, they are not the product of the plantations made and watered from above, but of some malignant weeds, the work of an enemy within or without us. Censoriousness, vanity, self-confidence, contempt of others, cannot be the genuine flowers of these heavenly plants, but must spring from some  
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root of bitterness within the soil not yet removed; or the stratagem of that insidious spirit, who could wind himself round the trees of paradise, and inject his poison, into their delicious fruits; who can, in the form of an angel of light, insinuate, into our best actions, and corrupt, when he cannot prevent them. Some things deform the practice of piety; and some quite destroy it in ourselves, and disappoint its happy influence on others. Sullenness, and melancholy make religion unamiable, and cast a gloom about it, which no way belongs to it. The fruit of the christian spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness. A spiritual pride, the silliest of all pride, ruins its own purpose, and leads thee farther from God and happiness, the oftener we approach him in the holiest of offices. In vain the assuming pharisee fasts and prays, if he is still the proud, the more proud pharisee, for so doing.

There is a fault opposite to being high-minded and boastful in religious performances, and that is, being ashamed of

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them: a fault, which need not have been guarded, in any country under the sun, besides our own; where, to the praise of our politeness, fashion is at irreconcilable odds with any expression of our belief; religion and profaneness have changed places and characters, and works of light sneak to corners and darkness for concealment, while those of darkness affront the day, and court observation. But you will be happy, if you are careful to avoid these, to avoid all extremes. The more you converse with your God, the more you will see cause to love and serve him; the more you admire his perfections, the less reason you will see to be enamoured of your own. You will take discretion for your guide, in works of piety, as in the other transactions of life; and will not expose to view those works, which are only to be seen by your Father in secret, nor omit those public offices and actions, which are to come within the observation of men, that they may in like manner glorify the same heavenly Father: you will practise the duties of religion sincerely yourself,

yourself, and find some, and make other favourable opportunities of recommending it to others. There is no occasion to cast your pearl to be trampled on by swine, and force advice upon persons utterly indisposed to receive it, and in places improper for the giving it; no call to turn preachers in streets, and reformers in drawing-rooms: but a superior may reprove, an equal gently invite to a duty; and both may discountenance the abuse of holy things, and, without any violence offered to decency, or breach of good manners, if they cannot silence, may leave the seat of the scorner. In a word, every one may do, and ought to do, what prudence warrants, occasion calls for, the honour of God demands, the Saviour and judge of men enjoins, who said,——Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven: but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Believe me, I am here far from pleading for impertinence or rudeness in religion: regard is

due to custom and fashion, deference to rank and condition, and civility to all men: propriety must conduct every action, which aims at pleasing, or succeeding in the world. I would therefore, with the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, please all men, if it was possible, and become all things to all, that I might gain some: but sure it is an undue excess of complaisance, a false, a fatal modesty, to give up religion for praise, our hopes of glory for the reputation of breeding; not to dare to maintain that in defiance of any wit or raillery of company, which Christianity obliges to avow in the face of torments and death. When such is the competition between mode and duty, I need not call in the authority of Apostles to determine the point; whether it be right to obey men, rather than God; judge you, judge every one, who pretends to the distinction of a rational being.

I have now done with the first part of religion, piety or the love of God; and am not without a pleasing hope, you will  
soon

soon from experience find, that her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Another part of religion, I observed, was virtue or the love of man. This part shall make some amends for the length of the other, and not more exceed the size of a postscript, than that has done of a letter. I dwelt the longer on the former head of duty, because it is apt to be less understood, and more neglected, than the other. For God being an invisible spirit, as he is out of sight, so he is often out of mind too. But men and women are continually before our eyes, and always raising our angry passions, or soliciting our softer affections. Our very nature and inclinations are in the interests of mankind; we often find our own pleasure and profit in serving them; present fame and reputation attend the doing such actions, and present infamy and penalties the contrary practice.

Piety begins; because to love God with all the heart, is declared the first and great commandment: and virtue fol-

lows of course; because to love your neighbour as yourself, is called the second, and like unto it; it is the direct consequence of the former, and one test and proof of it: for both duties are connected together in the nature of things, and joined in the same commandment under the Christian law. Man is the image of God, the object of his love, and therefore must be of ours: he is our brother by birth, our companion in all the scenes of life, claims a natural share in all our good offices, and furnishes occasions for the display of our several virtues; and for these reasons we have received commandment, that he who loveth God, love his neighbour also; and again, if any say, he loveth God, and loveth not his brother, he is a liar: for if he loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God, whom he hath not seen? this is not only commandment, but the distinguishing commandment of Christianity, and carried to a new height by the author of it, who says, behold a new commandment. I give unto you, that ye love one another; that

that ye love one another, as I have loved you : by this shall all men know you are my disciples, if ye thus love one another. You will therefore not doubt of your obligation to perform this duty ; you will rather want to know, what it is, and how you may best perform it.

Virtue then, as it respects other men, may be defined, the desire and endeavour of procuring all possible good to your neighbour, and removing all possible evil from him. The degree of that desire and endeavour is to be measured by that of the love of yourself : you must love your neighbour as yourself, and in all cases do to him, as you could in reason wish and desire others to do to you : whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do unto them. This is a measure of duty you always carry about with you, and will resolve all difficulties better than any casuist in the world. If you ask who is your neighbour ? the parable of the good Samaritan answers you, it is every man who stands in need of your assistance.



Your benevolence and good-will must be commensurate to the human species, and extend as far as the inhabitants of the globe. This will be your happy case, when you put up your hearty prayers for the welfare of all your fellow-creatures, that God would be pleased to make his ways known unto men, his saving health unto all nations; as often as you compassionate the miseries and sorrows of the most distant sufferers, and beg the assistance of heaven for relief of every human distress of body, mind, or fortune: you practice this duty in variety of instances (for all cannot, need not be mentioned) when you give to all their due, custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour: when you owe no man any thing, besides a debt, which you will be ever paying, and will never quite pay, that is, to love one another: as long as you injure no one in his life, fortune, or fame: when you are not angry with your brother without, or beyond cause, for that is to murder him; and do not covet or desire his goods, for that is to rob him: when

you

you speak truth with your neighbour; for  
 to deceive, is to defraud him: when you  
 say no more evil of any man, than you  
 know, for that is bearing false witness;  
 when you do not say all the evil, you do  
 know of any man, for this is charity, and  
 will cover a multitude of his sins, and of  
 your's too: as often as you acknowledge  
 and rejoice in the merit and success of  
 others, without envy at their condition,  
 and with contentment in your own: when-  
 ever you do a good turn, or forgive a bad  
 one; as often as you do a kind office, or  
 discountenance an ill one: when you are  
 severe to your own faults, and candid to  
 those of other people: when you practise 5  
 every instance of virtue and humanity  
 yourself, and love and encourage it in  
 others: when you instruct the ignorant,  
 admonish a friend, pardon an enemy:  
 when you love all men for Christ's sake;  
 when you love good men above other men,  
 because he loves them so too, because this  
 will promote the credit and interest of  
 virtue and goodness in the world: when  
 you make your Saviour your debtor upon  
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promise; that is, when you in any shape feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned; since you do to him, whatever you do to the least of these his brethren. Some part of your substance is the due of the poor: it is the justice of paying, as well as the charity of giving. If you ask what part? I answer, perhaps the thirtieth: because, when God was pleased to be the civil governor of a particular people, he settled this portion on the poor out of every man's income. This then may be thought bare justice; what exceeds it, charity; what greatly exceeds it, liberality. Suppose therefore you set apart the like proportion of your allowance, and consecrate it to these kind purposes: You may relieve by it a sick, you may clothe a naked person, you may open the gloomy dungeon of a jail, and restore a confined wretch to the light of the sun, and the business and converse of mankind: and thus, in the case before us, you will be sure to do justly. But charity will be ingenious to find out as many reasons and ways of doing more, as people commonly

commonly do excuses for not doing so much. The price of a diversion now and then bestowed on these occasions, a ribbon given up, a superfluous ornament of dress sacrificed to a pressing object, has a peculiar grace, is economy and charity together; will flush the heart with conscious joy, and light up the countenance into the smile of angels: and thus you will be sure that you love mercy. Present pleasure, the approbation of the world, and returns of kindness, will often accompany the performance of these actions; but they must not be your principle of action, because they will make your performance fickle, and rob you of your reward hereafter. If you do a kind action because you are pleased with it, you will omit it, whenever your fancy turns another way: ~~and when you do your~~ alms to be seen of men, you have your reward; but then it is only that of empty praise: and if you do good only to those, who will do good to you again, you will often have your reward also; or if you fail, men are your debtors, you have no claim upon God. But if you act on a principle

principle of obedience to God, and after the example of Christ, you will be uniform in practice, and steady in duty to enemies and friends, without humour, without partiality, without ceasing; and you cannot fail of your reward, and that the greatest, which your Father, who sees in secret, will give you openly: and so you will be sure of walking humbly with your God; that is, upon the whole, you will have the satisfaction of knowing you do what God requires of you: for what does the Lord thy God, in all cases, require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

There is still another part of religion and virtue, closely connected with the former, which ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> itself for its object, as the other two parts have God and our neighbour: and as those two are called, the love of God, and the love of man, this may be stiled the true love of ourselves; and consists in acquiring those personal dispositions, and christian graces, which adorn and raise the soul, and in regulating

regulating those passions and affections, which disorder and debase it. You will see my meaning by a few instances. Humility, meekness, purity, temperance, diligence, are personal graces and dispositions, which must be formed in us, because they are necessary to our own peace and happiness, and no less so to that of other people: and the opposite vices, pride, anger, immodesty, luxury, idleness, must be avoided, because they interrupt our commerce with God and man, and destroy the greatness and peace of our own minds. You must not be proud, because then you will assume too much to yourself, and not be disposed to give others their due; you will be captious and uneasy, giving and receiving offence; you will be disrespectful to God, rude to man, and hated of both. You must not be open to the gusts of passion and fury, which lay waste, wherever they gain admission, overturn your own quiet, and hurry you into numberless indecencies, transgressions and mischiefs. The body of a christian must be pure, because it is the temple of the Holy Ghost;

Ghost; and the mind, where the Father and Son have promised to make their abode, must not be the seat of wanton thoughts, and immodest desires. Avarice contracts the soul, and shuts the hand: luxury sinks the soul in sensuality, and extinguishes every spark of divinity within us. You must guard your heart; because out of it are the issues of life and death. You must admit nothing below the dignity of your nature, which God made little lower than the angels, and will raise to an equality with them. Forfeit any peace, rather than that of your own conscience; for if your heart condemns you, God is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things. Idleness is the source of uneasiness, and the inlet to temptation of every kind; do the best things; do any innocent thing, rather than do nothing. Use this world, as not abusing it; neither snarl at its enjoyments, nor be intoxicated with its pleasures. In a word, that I may at last conclude, remember, that the habits and dispositions of the mind, which you acquire and cultivate through life, will be the ornament or disgrace

grace of it, and will constitute your happiness or torment to eternity.

I have now performed my promise; you will perhaps be inclined to say, and exceeded it too: I promised a letter; I send almost a book. But if it is not too long for you to read and consider it, I shall have no cause to think it too long to have been written by me. We are probationers together for eternity, fellow-travellers in the road to happiness: I am advanced many stages before you in the journey of life, and have sent you the best informations I have been able to collect in the way; happy, if I have thrown such lights on the path, as may enable you to discern, and encourage you to chuse, that way everlasting, which leads directly through Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and terminates at the palace of the great king, the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. I am obliged and delighted to do all the good I can to every one; I am especially obliged and delighted to do it to any one, who  
bears



bears the name, and stands in the relation you do: and I feel a very sensible pleasure in doing this office to you in particular, because you have many amiable qualities, and are desirous of more; because I love you, and know not how to shew you, in a better or stronger manner, the sincerity of that affection, with which I am

Your faithful friend,

and obedient humble servant.

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## P R A Y E R.

O GLORIOUS God! Who makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to praise thee, I prostrate myself before thee, my sovereign Lord, in all humility, devotion, and thankfulness of soul; praying, that as thou hast made me capable of considering, admiring, loving, and raised me to  
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thy hope of seeing, enjoying, and being like thee for ever, I may never neglect that pleasing duty, never forfeit this high expectation, but always keep alive in my soul such a sense of thy majesty, thy greatness, thy goodness, as may shew itself in all possible acts of gratitude and service.

For O mighty Lord God ! who madest all things, and sustaineest by thy power all that thou hast made ; thou art the source of happiness to all thy creatures ; thou openest thy hand, and fillest all things living with plenteousness and joy ; thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ; thou takest away their breath, they die, and are again turned to their dust : in thee I live and move, and have my being : all that I am, and all that I have, is the pure effect of thy undeserved bounty ; all that I hope to be, or to possess, even in the boundless regions of eternity, must be the pure effect of the same undeserved, endless bounty. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name : - praise him for his wonders of creation and providence,

providence, praise him according to his excellent greatness; bless him for his graces of redemption and sanctification, for as is his majesty, so is his mercy: praise him for all the temporal blessings, with which he has made my cup to overflow; for life and its comforts, preservation the last night, and all the rest of my days, from innumerable accidents, dangers, calamities, and sorrows: praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thy infirmity, who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness.

O! continue that mercy, which is over all thy works, to me thy sinful, but repenting creature: give me a due sense of, and then pardon all my departures from thee, all my offences of youth or age, of infirmity, or presumption, of omission and commission, by thought, word, or deed, against thy divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against me: I do earnestly repent, and  
am

am heartily sorry for these my misdoings; the remembrance of them, the not remembering many of them; is grievous unto me: have mercy upon me, most merciful Father; for thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past; and grant, that I may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life.

And here, O Lord, I offer myself, my soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee: and thou, who knowest I have no power of myself to help myself, keep me both outwardly in my body, and inwardly in my soul, that I may be delivered from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul. Save and defend me in all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; divest me of my unruly affections, and fond desires; and clothe me with all the gentle graces of the Gospel, humility, meekness, patience, purity, piety, charity; the heavenly dispositions of saints and angels; the wedding garment,

garment, which admits to the supper of the Lamb. Let no deceitful pleasures of this transitory life, soften, or debauch my mind, or ever divert my eye from looking stedfastly up to those pleasures, which for ever flow from thy right hand. May the blessings of life make me thankful and obedient, and the sorrows of it, resigned and amended; and so lead me through all things temporal, that I finally lose not the things eternal. Let no solicitous cares distract, no covetous desires debase, no angry passions disturb, no distant fears alarm, no melancholy thoughts depress my soul; but seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and gaining an interest in my God and Saviour, let me trust in him for all necessary provision, defence, and comfort. In all my ways here upon earth, direct me with thy counsel, O thou infinite wisdom! guard me with thy providence, O thou infinite power! and after that receive me to glory; O thou infinite goodness!

I beseech

I beseech thee also to extend that goodness to the whole race of men, and to give to all nations, unity, peace, and the knowledge of thy ways. Let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; and grant, that all orders of men in it may truly and godly serve thee. Bless my country with righteousness and peace; deliver and protect it from the assaults of enemies without, and the treason of factions within. Bless, direct, and support the king, his family, and all who are put in authority under him. Bless and preserve my relations and friends: forgive and convert my enemies, and thine: and ~~NO~~ ! relieve all the various distresses of mankind, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions: let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner come before thee, according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those who are appointed to die.

And

And O! may the changes and chances of this mortal life, the vanity, the vexation of things, the hurry of time, the decays of nature, teach me always so to number my days, that I may more and more apply my heart unto wisdom. Let every night remind me of lying down in the dust; every morning, of rising to life, to an eternal life, and standing before the dread tribunal of Christ: and because I know neither the day, nor hour of my master's coming, grant I may be always ready, and never live in such a state as I shall fear to die in; but that whether I live, I may live unto the Lord, or, whether I die, I may die in the Lord: and in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good God, deliver me, for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy Son, in whose name and merits I approach thy throne of grace, saying, Our Father, &c.



FINIS.





